

Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

Draft Coordination Plan

**Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act:
A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) Section 6002**

March 16, 2007

**U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
and
City and County of Honolulu
Department of Transportation Services**

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The U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the City and County of Honolulu Department of Transportation Services (DTS) have initiated an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to provide fixed-guideway transit on exclusive right-of-way in the highly congested east-west transportation corridor between Kapolei and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UH Mānoa) (Figure 1-1), as specified in the 2030 O'ahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP). The project would provide faster, more reliable public transportation services in the corridor than those currently operating in mixed-flow traffic. The project would also provide an alternative to private automobile travel and improve linkages within the corridor. Implementation of the project, in conjunction with other improvements included in the ORTP, would moderate anticipated traffic congestion in the corridor. The project also supports the goals of the O'ahu General Plan and the ORTP by serving areas designated for urban growth, as well as a City and County of Honolulu Ordinance signed into law on January 6, 2007, to provide fixed-guideway transit between Kapolei and UH Mānoa and Waikīkī.

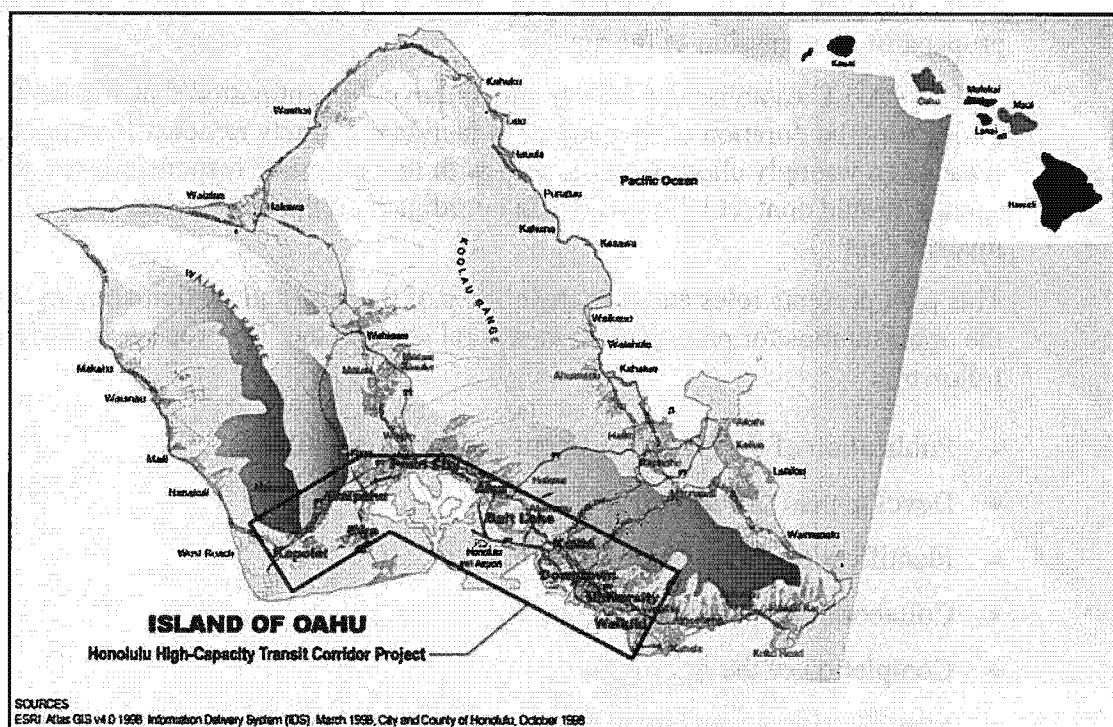


Figure 1-1. Project Vicinity

The Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project Coordination Plan (this plan) provides the structure for coordination between FTA, DTS, participating agencies, and the public during the process of preparing an EIS to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and its implementing

Lead Agencies

The lead agencies must perform the functions that they have traditionally performed in preparing an EIS in accordance with 23 CFR part 771 and 40 CFR parts 1500-1508. In addition, the lead agencies now must identify and involve participating agencies; develop coordination plans; provide opportunities for public and participating agency involvement in defining the Purpose and Need and determining the range of alternatives; and collaborate with participating agencies in determining methodologies and the level of detail for the analysis of the alternatives. Lead agencies also must provide increased oversight in managing the process and resolving issues.

Federal Transit Administration

The FTA is the federal lead agency. The agency's responsibilities include the following:

- Ensure that the EIS required under NEPA is completed in accordance with SAFETEA-LU and applicable federal law
- Provide oversight in managing the process and resolving issues
- Facilitate the timely and adequate delivery of the environmental review process
- Be responsible for the content of the EIS, furnish guidance, independently evaluate and approve documents, and ensure that project sponsors comply with mitigation commitments
- Make the decision regarding Purpose and Need used in the NEPA evaluation and range of alternatives to be evaluated in the NEPA document in consultation with the joint lead agency and after consideration of input from the public and participating agencies
- Accept the identification of the Preferred Alternative
- Decide, in consultation with the joint lead agency, whether to develop the Preferred Alternative to a higher level of detail.

City and County of Honolulu, Department of Transportation Services

The DTS is the project sponsor, joint lead agency for the NEPA process, and lead agency for the Hawai'i Chapter 343 process. The responsibilities of DTS will be as follows:

- Prepare the environmental document for the Locally Preferred Alternative defined by the City Council of Honolulu and determined by the City Administration, as outlined in Ordinance 07-001.

- Review preliminary drafts of the draft EIS and final EIS
- Provide written comment within 15 days of the receipt of information and request for comment at each of the NEPA milestones
- May adopt the environmental impact statement of the lead agency, without re-circulation, when the cooperating agency concludes that its comments and suggestions have been satisfied.

Agencies Requested to Participate as Cooperating Agencies

U.S. Department of Defense (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

U.S. Department of Defense (U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii)

U.S. Department of Defense (U.S. Naval Base Pearl Harbor)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (U.S. Coast Guard – 14th Coast Guard District)

U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration

State of Hawai'i, Department of Transportation

Participating Agencies

Participating agencies are those with an interest in the project. The standard for participating agency status is more encompassing than the standard for cooperating agency status described above. Therefore, cooperating agencies are, by definition, participating agencies, but not all participating agencies are cooperating agencies.

Responsibilities of Participating Agencies

The responsibilities of the participating agencies will be as follows:

- Provide input on the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project and the schedule
- Participate in the NEPA process starting at the earliest possible time
- Identify, as early as practicable, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental or socioeconomic impacts or any issues that could substantially delay or prevent an agency from granting a permit or other approval needed for the project
- Work cooperatively with DTS to resolve any issues that could result in denial of any approvals for the project
- Participate in the issues resolution process identified in this document

State of Hawai'i, Office of Environmental Quality Control

State of Hawai'i Office of Hawaiian Affairs

State of Hawai'i University of Hawai'i.

Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Chapter 3

Coordination Structure

Coordination will be an ongoing process with increased emphasis on the following decision milestones:

- Publication of the Notice of Intent and scoping activities
- Development of Purpose and Need
- Identification of the range of alternatives
- Collaboration on methodologies
- Completion of the draft EIS
- Identification of the Preferred Alternative and the level of design detail
- Completion of the final EIS
- Completion of the ROD.
- Completion of permits, licenses, or approvals after the ROD.

Coordination will be completed in several ways, depending on the needs at each individual step. The coordination will include meetings with participating agencies and the public, correspondence with individual agencies related to areas of their expertise, and distribution of preliminary documents to cooperating agencies for their review and comment.

Early Coordination

Early coordination includes an opportunity for participating agencies to provide input and guidance on the scope of the EIS, Purpose and Need, and range of alternatives. Concurrent with issuance of the Notice of Intent, participating agencies will be provided a scoping information package that includes project background, elements of the environment identified for analysis in the draft EIS, the proposed Purpose and Need, and the proposed range of alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS. The information will be developed with consideration of comments from previous scoping and public involvement activities and the conclusion of the transportation planning process that culminated in the issuance of an Alternatives Analysis Report and the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will be presented during scoping for the EIS.

After considering this input, the lead agencies will decide the project's Purpose and Need. Per previous guidance issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), which was affirmed by Congress in its conference report on SAFETEA-LU, other Federal agencies should afford substantial deference to the FTA's articulation of the Purpose and Need for a transportation action.

Chapter 4 Schedule of Coordination Activities

Activity	Purpose	Date
Letters of invitation	To identify the status of agencies and invite project participation	March 2007
Project Scoping	To collect agency input on the Purpose and Need, Alternatives, and scope of analysis for the EIS	March - April 2007
Ongoing consultations with individual agencies	To develop analysis methodologies and collect pertinent information related to the alternatives	2007
Preliminary draft EIS	To solicit comments from cooperating agencies on the materials to be included in the draft EIS	Winter 2007 - 2008
Draft EIS	To solicit comments from agencies and the public on the analysis included in the draft EIS	Spring 2008
Preliminary Final EIS	To solicit comments from cooperating agencies on the content of the final EIS	Fall 2008
Final EIS	To notify agencies and the public on the findings of the final EIS	Winter 2008
ROD	To notify agencies and the public on the project's environmental clearance	Mid-2009
Permits	To obtain permits required for project completion	2008 through construction

The lead agency, cooperating agencies, and participating agencies shall work cooperatively in accordance with this section to identify and resolve issues that could delay completion of the environmental review process or could result in denial of any approvals required for the project under applicable laws.

Based on information received from the lead agency, participating agencies and cooperating agencies shall identify, as early as practicable, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental or socioeconomic impacts. Issues of concern include any issues that could substantially delay or prevent an agency from granting a permit or other approval that is needed for the project.

The following issues resolution process will be followed:

- Meetings will be held as needed during the course of the NEPA process to discuss and resolve issues
- If issues are not being resolved in a timely manner:
 1. An official issues resolution meeting will be scheduled
 2. If resolution cannot be achieved within 30 days following such a meeting and a determination has been made by the FTA that all information necessary to resolve the issues has been obtained, then
 3. FTA will notify the heads of all participating agencies, cooperating agencies, DTS, the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, and the Council of Environmental Quality of the FTA determination, and
 4. FTA will publish such notice in the *Federal Register*.